

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A bulky sheet material having three-dimensional protrusions comprising a first layer and a second layer adjacent to the first layer, said first layer and said second layer being partly joined together at joints in a prescribed pattern, said first layer having a number of raised portions which are located among said joints, said second layer comprising a material which exhibits elastomeric behavior, and said bulky sheet material exhibiting elastomeric behavior as a whole and breathability.

2. The bulky sheet material according to claim 1, which has a basis weight of 20 to 200 g/m², an apparent density of 5 to 50 kg/m³ under a pressure of 0.4 cN/cm², and an apparent density of 20 to 130 kg/m³ under a pressure of 34.2 cN/cm².

3. The bulky sheet material according to claim 1, which has a recovery of 50% or more from 50% extension.

4. The bulky sheet material according to claim 1, wherein said second layer comprises a fiber aggregate comprising fibers which are made of a thermoplastic polymer and exhibit thermal shrinkability and elastomeric behavior, and said first layer comprises a fiber aggregate comprising fibers which are made of a thermoplastic polymer and have substantially no thermal shrinkability or do not shrink at or below the thermal shrinkage temperature of said fibers exhibiting thermal shrinkability.

5. The bulky sheet material according to claim 4, wherein said second layer comprises a fiber aggregate comprising latent crimping fibers.

6. The bulky sheet material according to claim 1, wherein at least one of said first layer and said second layer has a large number of perforations.

7. The bulky sheet material according to claim 1, which is for use as a part of elements constituting an absorbent article having a liquid-permeable topsheet, a liquid-

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~~impermeable backsheet and an absorbent member interposed between said topsheet and said backsheet.~~

8. A method of producing a bulky sheet material having three-dimensional protrusions according to claim 4 comprising the steps of:

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 carding fibers by a carding machine to form a carded web that is a first layer, superposing the first layer and a separately prepared second layer on each other, joining together the first layer and the second layer in parts forming a prescribed pattern, and

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 heat-treating the joined sheets at or above a temperature at which fibers constituting the second layer exhibit thermal shrinkage, to thereby shrink the second layer.

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